

2015 Animal Services Report

Live Outcomes and No Kill Best Practices

- Reached a new milestone, achieving live outcomes for nearly 95% of the approximately 18,000 animals who came into the shelter in 2015.
- Took in 17,831 owned and surrendered pets.
- Began implementing best practices in No Kill animal welfare in order to improve the quality of life for animals in the care of the shelter, reduce length of stay and provide post adoption follow-up support and resources.
- Began an assessment of current wildlife management practices and launched communication with other jurisdictions, the Humane Society of the United States and Travis County on current practices.
- Analyzed the April 2015 animal services audit and revisited the Audit and Finance Committee.
- Guided the first ever strategic planning process for animal services including staff, volunteers, community stakeholders, commission members and other animal welfare partners.
- Implemented a series of policy and procedural updates including first-come, first-serve policy for adopters, improved kennel signage, a walk board system to track dog walking, a weekend manager-on-duty schedule, a behavioral euthanasia protocol, daily, in-kennel enrichment and a cat enrichment program and protocol.
- Shelter vets performed 5,383 spay and neuter surgeries, 456 specialty surgeries, 75 cruelty case examinations and 874 rabies observations.

Marketing and Media

- Launched a redesign of the Austin Animal Center website to make it easier for site visitors to quickly access information about adoptions, volunteering and foster care and to ensure viewers can find information about wildlife, emergency response and animal control and other services easily.
- Conducted 14 adoption promotions to increase pet adoption.
- Held the Super Shelter 'Adoptathon' in July, which was the first joint promotion hosted by all three Austin shelters.
- Worked with the ASPCA and Animal Planet for the Road to the Puppy Bowl promotion and received a grant of \$25,000 towards pet adoptions.
- Participated in the Animal Planet Puppy Bowl, sending one puppy to New York City for filming. Puppy Bowl will air during the 2016 Super Bowl on Animal Planet
- Began research and action to select and implement the best technological solutions for facilitating adoptions and promoting business efficiencies and facilitating best practice management.
- Partnered with ASPCA and Austin Humane Society for Keep Austin Adopting Mega Match-A-Thon.
- AAC has 60,000 followers on three different social media platforms. 500,000 to 1,000,000 people engage with AAC on social media every week.
- AAC launched Mascotas de Austin, a Spanish-language Facebook page to reach the Spanish-speaking community in Austin.

- The story of Blackie, a senior dog given a second chance at life through a ‘fospice’ home, was featured first in The Huffington Post and was picked by other national news outlets, and eventually was told by Fox and Friends (National Fox news station), the Dodo, AOL news, ABC national news and was shared by Ashton Kutcher.
- Deputy Chief Kristen Auerbach presented at the Society of Animal Welfare Administrators National Research Symposium about her work on saving shelter dogs through foster. The study was later published by Dr. Emily Weiss of the ASPCA. <http://aspcapro.org/blog/2015/12/02/we-don%E2%80%99t-know-what-we-don%E2%80%99t-know>
- Deputy Chief Kristen Auerbach published this piece in Huffington Post, titled, “How Austin Became America’s Largest No Kill City.” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristen-auerbach/how-austin-became-americas-largest-no-kill-city_b_8482294.html

Animal Care, Enrichment and Exercise

- Implemented a staff dog walking initiative, resulting in 1,000 plus additional dog walks each month.
- With financial support from private foundations, brought in several national experts on shelter pet animal care and behavior.
- AAC was visited by multiple national animal welfare groups, including Frances Battista of Best Friends Animal Society, Dr. Tami McReynolds and Kate Pullen from the ASPCA, Dr. Amy Marder, Bernice Clifford and Caitlin Quinn of Animal Farm Foundation and Aimee Sadler of Dogs Playing for Life.
- Hosted an eight-day shelter dog play group training for staff and volunteers, sponsored by a grant from Animal Farm Foundation.
- Dogs Out Loud installed the ‘thinking walk’ designed so volunteers take dogs to activity stations on their daily walk. They also purchased enrichment carts, enrichment toys and treat buckets for every single dog kennel at Town Lake and Austin Animal Center. Dogs Out Loud also started teaching safe dog handling classes for staff and volunteers.
- The Friends of the Austin Animal Center received a grant to build play yards for shelter dogs. These were constructed in August. The Friends also used funds for special needs animal behavioral and medical support, and provided shading for several of the kennel areas.

Volunteer, Foster and Rescue Programs

- Volunteers contributed 49,508 hours of service to animal services. The shelter currently has 471 active volunteers. In 2015, 460 new volunteers came on board and an additional 107 attended orientation but have not started volunteering.
- 2,416 animals went to foster homes, with 49.5% being adopted directly from foster.
- 4,870 animals were sent to rescue groups.
- Staff and volunteers coordinated with PARD and community partners to operate an emergency shelter for 100 people and around 25 pets during and after the October floods.
- 463 pets were adopted through one of the specialty Friends programs. 33 Hard Luck Hounds, 272 Classic Canines and 288 Desperate Housecats found homes. On December 31, the 1,000th Desperate Housecat since the inception of the program was adopted.

Animal Protection and Outreach

- Provided more than 8000 free spay and neuter surgeries to owned pets in the community and shelter vets sterilized 5000 animals in the shelter. 1,200 owned pets were vaccinated at three free rabies vaccine clinics.
- Animal protection officers responded to 31,500 calls for service, transported 1,142 pets to partner groups and other facilities and returned 592 stray pets in the field.
- Animal protection responded to three major flood events, coordinating with the police department to rescue livestock and companion animals trapped in flood waters, transporting pets of evacuees to safe locations and setting up emergency shelters for pets and people.